

COLLABORATION WITH STATES

ISSUE

State health care programs, such as Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Plan, and county medical assistance programs serve as an important resource for American Indian and Alaska Native people to access health care services that might not be otherwise available.



BACKGROUND

As Federal oversight decreases, States assume a larger role in the development of new initiatives and reform of their State health care programs. Currently, the States provide a variety of services to American Indian and Alaska Native people through programs such as vaccination and immunization programs, maternal child health programs, and vital statistic programs. To monitor developments at the State level and access issues for the Indian population, the agency established a State Health Initiative. The Initiative also provides technical assistance to States, tribes, and other Federal agencies regarding the implementation of State health care reform initiatives, including section 1115 and 1915b Medicaid waiver demonstration programs. The Indian Health Service (IHS) reviews State health reform initiatives for legal and policy implications that such initiatives might have on the IHS, tribal, and urban Indian health care system. The agency also reviews State health reform initiatives to determine if the health needs of the Indian population of the State have been addressed.

SITUATION

Involvement in the development and implementation of State health reform initiatives at the local level is important. In many States, the IHS Area offices and tribes have established a relationship with State officials, and meetings are held on a regular basis. Maintaining communications through tribal consultation meetings and/or establishing State/tribal advisory groups make it possible for State health programs to complement and serve as an integral resource to the IHS health care system.

OPTIONS/PLANS

The agency will continue to provide technical assistance and review to State health reform activities regarding issues that might impact the IHS health care system and that can benefit the American Indian and Alaska Native population.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For referral to the appropriate spokesperson, contact the IHS Public Affairs Staff at 301-443-3593.